

for review and comment prior to tasking staff with analyses.

Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Helen Allen, 907-271-2809, at least 5 working days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: August 21, 1996.

Richard H. Schaefer,

Director, Office of Fisheries Conservation and Management, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 96-22003 Filed 8-28-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

[I.D. 082096F]

Western Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Western Pacific Fishery Management Council will hold a meeting of its Bottomfish Task Force.

DATES: The meeting will be held on September 24, 1996, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Executive Center, 1088 Bishop St., Room 4003, Honolulu, HI; telephone: (808) 539-3000.

Council address: Western Pacific Fishery Management Council, 1164 Bishop St., Suite 1405, Honolulu, HI 96813.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kitty M. Simonds, Executive Director; telephone: (808) 522-8220.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The task force will hold its third meeting to discuss and formulate limited entry alternatives for the Mau Zone bottomfish fishery in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands and consider other business as required.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Kitty M. Simonds, (808) 522-8220 (voice) or (808) 522-8226 (fax), at least 5 days prior to meeting date.

Dated: August 21, 1996.

Richard H. Schaefer,

Director, Office of Fisheries Conservation and Management, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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[Docket No. 960412111-6229-03; I.D. 080596I]

RIN 0648-ZA20

West Coast Salmon Fisheries; Northwest Emergency Assistance Plan (NEAP)—License Buy Out Program (LBOP)

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of proposed program; request for comments.

SUMMARY: This notice requests public comment on new bidding options for the 1996 Washington State Salmon Vessel License Buy Out Program (LBOP) to be administered by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) through a cooperative agreement with NMFS. The objectives of the program are to provide financial assistance to commercial salmon fishermen adversely impacted by the salmon fishery disaster, and to aid the long-term viability of the fishery resource. This notice also responds to comments submitted on the notice of proposed 1996 LBOP, which was published in the Federal Register on April 23, 1996 (61 FR 17879). In that notice, NMFS announced certain administrative changes to the NEAP and requested comments on proposed NEAP revisions for the Habitat Restoration Program and the Data Collection Jobs Program, as well as the LBOP. On August 1, 1996, NMFS published a Federal Register notice (61 FR 40197) implementing the final program for the Habitat Restoration Jobs Program and Data Collection Jobs Program, and also announced that final decisions on the administration of the 1996 LBOP will be deferred until the public is provided with notice and an opportunity to comment on new bidding options developed as a result of comments received on the initial notice.

DATES: Written comments must be received on or before September 27, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be sent to Stephen P. Freese, Northwest Emergency Assistance Plan, Trade and Industry Services Division, Northwest Regional Office, National Marine

Fisheries Service, BIN C15700, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Stephen Freese, (206) 526-6113.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On August 2, 1995, the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) declared that a fishery resource disaster continued in 1995 for the salmon fisheries of the Pacific States of California (north of San Francisco), Oregon, and Washington, excluding Puget Sound. Under the authority of the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act (IFA) of 1986 (16 U.S.C. 4107(d)), as amended, an additional \$12.7 million in Federal financial assistance was made available for affected salmon fishermen.

In the April 23, 1996, Federal Register notice (61 FR 17879), NMFS announced its decision to continue the basic structure of the Habitat Restoration Jobs Program and the Data Collection Jobs Program, as first established on October 11, 1994 (59 FR 51419), with subsequent amendments published on January 31, 1995 (60 FR 3908), and June 22, 1995 (60 FR 32507). NMFS decided to modify certain limitations, terms, and conditions of the NEAP programs to enable more fishermen to benefit from the assistance available from the jobs programs and to further reduce fishing capacity under the LBOP. The public was asked in the notice to comment on these new terms, limitations, and conditions prior to final implementation.

With respect to the 1996 LBOP, four options were presented for public comment, as follows:

Option 1—Eligible fishermen submit new bids or maintain the bids that they submitted to the 1995 LBOP. Starting with the lowest offers, licenses are accepted and retired by WDFW until available funding is exhausted.

Option 2—Starting with the lowest unsuccessful 1995 LBOP offer, WDFW would purchase licenses until available funding is exhausted.

Option 3—Unsuccessful bidders in the 1995 LBOP are offered set fixed prices for each license: Salmon troll and delivery—\$24,894, Salmon gill net—\$38,000, and Salmon charter—\$21,300. Remaining funds would be applied to new applications starting with the lowest offer.

Option 4—Applicants submit bids and uninsured loss estimates. Starting with the lowest ratio of bid to uninsured loss, WDFW would purchase licenses until available funding is exhausted.

In response to the April 23, 1996, notice of proposed program, NMFS received 27 comment letters from 10 fishing associations, 14 fishermen, 1 tribe, and 2 government entities. Most of